

~~DO NOT REMOVE FROM JUSTIN 222~~

STUDY OF INFORMATIVE LABELING ON CERTAIN  
YARD GOODS

by

HAZEL DELL HOWE

B. S., Kansas State College  
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1921

---

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1936

LD  
2668  
TH  
1935  
H61  
C.2

ALL202 485231

2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	3
PURPOSE . . . . .	9
DEFINITION OF TERMS . . . . .	9
REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	10
METHOD OF PROCEDURE . . . . .	14
Choice of Localities . . . . .	14
Securing Data . . . . .	18
Interpretation of Data Secured from the Retailer . . . . .	19
Data Available from Wholesaler . . . . .	39
SUMMARY OF RESULTS . . . . .	43
CONCLUSION . . . . .	44
ACKNOWLEDGMENT . . . . .	45
LITERATURE CITED . . . . .	46
ADDITIONAL REFERENCES . . . . .	48

## INTRODUCTION

Wise selection of textiles and clothing is one of the important problems that confronts the consumer-buyer. Lowered incomes of the past few years have made it imperative that consumers obtain maximum returns from money spent. They are aware that much of their purchasing in the past has brought them doubtful satisfactions, but they have found it difficult to improve their methods of buying.

The selection of goods now presents perplexing problems to any purchaser, first, because of the multiplicity of articles from which a choice may be made. The number of things offered for sale has increased to include many for which there is no need and many which the purchaser will not be able to buy. Further confusion has arisen because of present production methods. Often many different qualities of the same goods, as well as substitutes that may or may not possess the values desired, are available, making it difficult to recognize the article needed for a specific purpose.

For the most part, the purchaser must depend upon inspection, previous experience, simple tests to which the goods may be subjected in the home, and price in making her

choices. In former times these methods were more or less satisfactory, but they have become increasingly inadequate. A report issued in 1933 by the Consumers Standards Committee of the N R A Consumers Advisory Board (14) states that consumers must buy under conditions no longer tolerated in government and industrial purchasing.

Suggested remedies for this situation include the education of the consumer, the education of the salesperson, the purchase of goods by brand or trade marks, the use of informative labeling, and the establishment of consumer specifications and grades.

The diversity of articles offered for sale and the rapid change in methods of production have made consumer education a huge task. Efforts along this line have lead the purchaser to become aware of the qualities which she desires, and for this reason have been of decided value. The present program of consumer education as sponsored by the American Home Economics Association, American Association of University Women, and other agencies has done much to arouse the interest of the manufacturing group in consumer-buyer needs.

The training of the salesperson as an aid to better buying is no doubt an advantage to the purchaser. It should be remembered, however, that the chief task of the salesperson is that of selling the merchandise in his own estab-

lishment so that the advice he gives cannot be relied upon entirely to locate the best article for the money.

Manufacturers contend that the consumer does not want information concerning the goods he buys, but would rather depend upon brands and trade marks. These market devices are definitely linked with advertising which as applied to consumer's goods have tended to offer irrelevant statements rather than facts. According to Coles (2) only about 12 per cent of the words used in the advertisements of 145 brands of 40 different articles gave specific facts concerning characteristics of the goods. It has been shown through investigation that the quality of the article sold under a brand name may vary from year to year. Brands cannot serve as a guide to quality because the same brand may be placed on goods from different manufacturers regardless of quality, or goods produced by one manufacturer meeting the same specifications may be given different brand names.

Those groups who are emphasizing consumer education stress the value of informative labeling as an aid to better buying. Federal specifications established for sheeting, blankets, and a few other fabrics have aroused the interest of consumers in the possibilities of the use of informative labeling. Some economists are thoroughly convinced that the wise selection of household commodities requires more

information than is at hand for over-the-counter buying. According to Agnew (1) in the past few years there has been increasing demand for the use of technical specifications to insure the quality of goods sold across the counter. Mack (10) says that informative labels can be used even in the absence of standardized merchandise. If used for a time experience will give sufficient information to enable graded standards to be established.

The type of information desirable may be brands placed on goods by the manufacturer, trade-marks that are protected by law guarantees, and labels which give specifications and information that will aid the consumer-buyer to make a choice between goods which in quality and price will most adequately meet her needs. The guarantee may be of some value or non whatever. To be of value it should be specific. For example, "color fast" does not signify whether it is fast to sun, laundry, or perspiration. Commercial standardization has been advocated as another means for facilitating the identification and comparison of qualities of goods. (2) All of these devices aid to some extent in buying but have not adequately met the consumer-buyer needs.

Labels of more or less value to the consumer are now appearing on goods. Unfortunately very few provide adequate

information. Specific information as to quality is occasionally given, some statements are meaningless, others serve only to divert the attention of the purchaser from the true qualities of the goods. Such catch phrases as "feature value", "always best", and "superior merit" suggest high quality, but give no real information.

Those who oppose informative labeling contend that it is a question as to how much information can be given and not be confusing to the consumer-buyer. It is stated that the large number of technical specifications required to give the necessary information would be confusing. They say that in some distant day the consumer may come to understand technical specifications, but until then it seems feasible that some suitable type of label be chosen that will be a consumer-short-cut to information which industry itself has on its products. (14) By this is meant the establishment of consumer grades.

Back (10) says the scarcity of informative labeling is due neither to lack of demand on the part of the consumer nor to the dearth of technical data needed; that the manufacturer and sellers use this information among themselves but do not pass it on.

Edgerton (6) maintains that a label should meet the following requirements, identify the material,



identify the producer, identify the standard and specifications and be straight forward, clear, and simple. The average label usually only tells a part of this story.

Coles (2) recommends standardization as a means of making the market devices more useful. This with informative labeling would provide a guide for consumer's choice between price and quality. Specifications which would be an aid in purchasing yard goods are fiber identification, shrinkage, color fastness, yarn count, tensile strength, weight, width, and service qualities.

To a limited extent the federal government is cooperating with manufacturing companies, retail associations, and professional groups in carrying out a program of research for the purpose of determining standards which are to be used for establishing grades and ratings. The establishment of consumer grades and specifications is being agitated. Use of such a device would simplify the perplexities of all purchasers. The Consumers Division of the National Emergency Council (14) states "There are two steps necessary before buyers are able to identify the true qualities of goods offered for sale. First, the industry must establish standard quality grades for its goods and services. Second, it must use labels to make quality grades known to the buying public. Until such an aid is available the consumer must depend upon information given on labels."



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which informative labels are used on certain yard goods offered for sale at retail. From these data to ascertain the type of information given, to determine which class of fabrics carried the most reliable information, and to determine if possible a relationship between informative labeling and the price mark. An attempt was also made to determine the extent of information which could be secured from the wholesaler concerning these same goods.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

As this study is concerned with terms relating to labeling, it is necessary for a clear understanding of the discussion which is to follow that certain terms be defined.

According to Kyrk (9) a label is the legend or descriptive matter or design printed or in some way impressed upon the goods or its container. A label may contain a trade-mark or brand name and in addition may have other matter, informational or otherwise.

According to the same author (9) a brand is a distinctive trade name, word, sign, figure, emblem or mark, or a combination of these for the purpose of designating the goods of a particular producer or group of producers.

A trade-mark is a brand that has been registered. (9). It is of little more value to the consumer than the brand except where the law may be administered for the benefit of the consumer.

Guarantees are statements which can be interpreted to mean that the producer, either manufacturer, wholesaler, or retailer assumes a certain amount of responsibility concerning the character of the goods. (9).

A good informative label carries facts regarding quality which relates directly to the purpose of the particular goods to which it is attached. Information that is often desirable concerning yard goods pertains to the fiber content, fabric construction, yarn count, tensile strength, permanence of finish, percentage of weighting or sizing, fastness of color to laundering, dry cleaning, sunlight and perspiration, the percentage of shrinkage, width of the fabric, weight per square yard, possibly the grade, and in some instances a measurement of qualities which pertain to some specific goods, as air permeability of blankets.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although labeling as a means of aiding the consumer-buyer has been recognized as one of the needs for a number of years comparatively little work has been done to

ascertain the type of labeling used. The investigator was unable to find a record of any study concerning informative labeling of yard goods in general. Three studies have been reported relative to the labeling of weighted silk; one has been reported in regard to silk yard goods, the other in regard to fabrics used in ready-made dresses, the third in regard to fabrics used in silk slips. A study of the value of labels on ready-made dresses has also been reported.

Results of a survey made by the Better Business Bureau concerning the weighting of silk yard goods was reported to the Consumers Advisory Board. (12). The general survey indicated that 85 per cent of the yard goods on sale in five Washington stores were weighted as defined by the Federal Trade Commissions' Trade Practices. The salespeople made no distinction between weighted silk and "all silk". The clerks in all the stores were poorly informed concerning the meaning of weighting. With the exception of a few placards in one store there was no information on bolts or placards concerning weighting. The bolts carried information as to the name of material, such as blossom crepe, the name of the manufacturer, and the number of the merchandise along with the statement "silk fabric". Buyers of yard goods stated that bolts from the manufacturers, in most instances, were not marked but were wrapped in paper

which had printed on the outside "weighted". The wrapper is, of course, removed when the merchandise is placed in stock. There is nothing on the selva to indicate the amount of weighting.

Another investigation by the Better Business Bureau concerned the labeling of silks found in ready-made dresses. Shoppers visited the dress departments of about 15 Washington department stores and women's ready-to-wear shops. In most instances information was not given as to whether the fabric in the dress was weighted or all pure silk. A number of dress buyers were interviewed and all stated that the manufacturer did not mark any of his goods weighted. They reported that a few manufacturers do mark pure dye merchandise as such. From this study it was concluded that manufacturers are not marking their merchandise to indicate whether the material is or is not weighted, and that the retailer is not informing the public because he does not possess the information. The report states that insufficient provision is made at present to inform consumers as to the real material content of any piece of yard goods or of any piece of wearing apparel.

The third study dealing with silk slips bearing the label "100% Pure Silk" was conducted by Cook and Moore (3).

Upon investigation of 17 slips, 16 were found to contain both water soluble and metallic weighting. A consumer survey showed that 90 per cent of the persons questioned had not noticed the variation in the wording of the two labels from that of "100% Pure Dye Silk" to "100% Pure Silk." It appeared evident that the consumer was being greatly misled.

Scott (13) made a study of labels appearing on ready-to-wear garments. Information which was given concerning shrinkage was expressed in numerous ways most of which were indefinite and therefore worthless to the consumer. Scott states that the American Standards Association has defined "Pre-shrunk" and recommends that the percentage of shrinkage allowed be definitely given on a label. Statements that pertained to color fastness varied in definiteness as much as the shrinkage labels. Labels giving fiber content were both indefinite and misleading. Scott says that labels are a potential source of valuable consumer assistance.

Cranor and Scott (4) made a study of consumer purchasing habits in regard to the use of brands and labels. Of the 500 consumers and 57 manufacturers interviewed 78 per cent purchased at least one textile by brand. The reason given for purchasing by brand name was that they had previously used the goods and knew of its durability. It

was found that 90 per cent were willing to pay more because of the manufacturer's guarantee.

#### METHOD OF PROCEDURE

In order to carry out the study, data from the local stores in two cities were secured as to the yardage of twelve different fabrics found in stock during one month of the year 1935, and the information given on the labels of the twelve different fabrics was tabulated in relation to brands, grades, and other information within each kind of fabric. A wholesale establishment with annual sales amounting to two million dollars was visited to secure information available there concerning these yard goods.

#### Choice of Localities

Two second class cities located in widely different sections of the state were chosen in which to conduct the investigation. In order to better understand and interpret the data a study was made of those factors which could influence the purchasing habits of the community. From Powell's Directory of Sherman County, compiled in 1930, and The Industrial Survey of Manhattan, Kansas and Trade Territory, compiled in 1931 supplemented by personal interviews information was gathered and tabulated as shown in

Table 1. Cities are designated as A and B. From this study these facts were secured.

City A located in the extreme western section of Kansas is the largest trading center between Salina, Kansas and Denver, Colorado. The city has a population of approximately 3400 with a trading area of 40 square miles which includes a population of approximately 8000. City B is located in the east-central section within driving distance of several larger trading-centers. The city has a population of 15,454 and has a trading area covering 30 square miles which includes a population of about 40,000.

In comparing the educational status of the cities the grade school enrollment in city A was a trifle larger in relation to its population than that of city B, while the high school averaged about the same per capita. City B has a state college with an enrollment of 3928 and a business college with an enrollment of 250. City A is located far from any college town. The public library of city A has 7,726 volumes while city B has 16,500 and the college library has 114,000 volumes. These facts may have a tendency to affect the type of demands of the consumer-buyer in the respective communities.

The chief industry in each territory is farming although each city has several small industries employing a relatively small number of workers.



The bank deposits of each community indicate something of its purchasing power. City A in relation to its population has a much higher bank deposit than city B.

The stores in city A included one independent store, one belonging to a large chain, and one belonging to a small chain. City B had in addition to the types of stores found in city A one belonging to a wholesale chain. In the study the stores will be designated by numbers as follows:

In city A

Store 1 is independently owned.

Store 2 belongs to a large chain.

Store 3 belongs to a small chain.

In city B

Store 4 is independently owned.

Store 5 belongs to a large chain.

Store 6 belongs to a small chain.

Store 7 belongs to a mail order chain.

Table 1 Information concerning localities where study was made.

	City A	City B
Population	3400	15,454
Trading Area		
Square miles	50	30
Population	8,000	40,000
Educational Facilities		
Grade School	712	1,373
High school	284	1,117
College	---	3,928
Business College	---	250
Library Volumes		
Public library	7,726	16,500
College library	---	114,000
Churches	9	16
Stores		
Large chain	1	1
Small chain	1	1
Home owned	1	1
Mail order	0	1
Industries	Ice and ice cream factory. Hatchery Railroad shops Wholesale grocery house.	Poultry and egg packing. Meat packing Flour mill Electric stove manufacture. Box factory
Purchasing Power		
Bank deposits	\$1,125,000.00	\$2,108,890.45

### Securing Data

Cooperation of the merchants was obtained by means of personal interviews. The purpose of the study was explained and a time convenient for securing the data was decided upon.

The stock in each store was surveyed and a tentative list of materials that were available was made. It was necessary in the final list to include those materials sold in each store. Twelve fabrics including representative examples of cotton, rayon, linen, and silk materials were chosen for study. These included silk flat crepe, rayon crepe, muslin, organdie, outing flannel, pillow tubing, pique, cotton print or percale, seersucker, suiting, sheeting, and crash toweling.

The yardage of the materials was secured at the beginning of a 30 day period and the additional yardage received during that time added to give the total yardage. The yardage was determined by the method acceptable by the store for inventory, in some cases using Putmans' improved cloth chart, in others counting folds of the fabric and calculating the yardage. In case there was reserve stock on hand the investigator accepted the manager's or buyer's figures as to the yardage from the monthly inventory check. One

store was unable to grant the privilege of the final checking of yardage because of a letter from the general office prohibiting the giving out of information of the kind sought.

A form for tabulating information was set up upon which was recorded the information found on the labels. This included name of the fabric, grade brand, guarantee, and other information. The width, price, and yardage of the material were tabulated along with the other information.

#### Interpretation of Data Secured from the Retailer

The investigation led to the measuring of 20,539 yards of fabric, 10,084 yards in the stores in city A, and 10,469 yards in city B, as shown in Table 2. It is of interest to note that although city B has nearly five times the population of city A there was found less than 500 yards more of the materials studied than was carried in city A.

The difference in amount of yardage carried in each community may be attributed to the fact that city B is located nearer the wholesale market which would encourage the present trend of hand-to-mouth buying. Another possible reason may be that residents in the larger city purchase



more ready-made garments than do those in the smaller city, or they may purchase in near-by large towns. The extent of the trade territory surrounding city A suggests that a larger rural population is served than for city B. In city A the store belonging to the large chain carried 5,696 yards of fabric as compared to 2,205 yards by the same type of store in city B. The yardage would have been somewhat greater in city B if the new material coming in during the month could have been added to the amount secured at the beginning of the period. The shipment of seersucker had not arrived when the first tabulation was made and because of the store ruling could not be included. Store 4 had a large stock of prints but the investigator was not allowed enough time for tabulating the information needed concerning all 12 fabrics and the prints were omitted. Factors such as the purchasing power of the retailer, and the demands of the buying public influenced the amount of yard goods carried by the stores. Store 3 was newly established in city A and was buying on a small scale until the demands and needs of the community were determined. Store 1 and 4 carried on an average, a smaller yardage than did the other stores. This, no doubt, was due to the fact that they are independently owned and operated on much smaller capital than the large chains.

Table 2 Summary by store and fabric of the yardage of the twelve materials studied.

Name of fabric	Store 1	Store 2	Store 3	Store 4	Store 5	Store 6	Store 7	Total
Crope (silk flat)	23	115	40	116½	107	601	240	1242
Crope (rayon flat)	136	391	36	--	221	15	78	879
Muslin (bleached)	108	938	274	220	47	327	330	2284
Organdie	106	163	143	170½	43	235	86	951
Outing flannel	145	768	214	328	65	220	231	1969
Pillow tubing	96	223	155	416½	220	283	--	1393
Plaque (bleached)	130	56	47	35	58	175	85	593
Prints	1418	1930	476	--	799	656	445	5724
Seersucker	146	443	90	50	--	308	391	1413
Suiting	60	228	85	56	240	324	312	1305
Sheeting (bleached)	156	311	181	119	110	400	75	1351
Toweling (crash)	45	110	73	124	295	455	345	1447
Total	2889	5696	1819	1634	2205	4002	2623	20553



The demand for ready-made sheets, towels, and pillow cases influenced the amount of piece goods carried by stores 1, 3, and 7. In store 7 the demand for pillow tubing was so small that the purchase of it was discontinued. Store 1 carried a large number of "style" or guest towels. Stores 2 and 6 had in stock a large amount of sheeting and muslin. This fact can be attributed to the store's policy of purchasing the supply needed for one years time.

The large chain stores carried a much greater yardage of rayon crepe than did the stores of the other type. This may be accounted for by the fact that these stores cater to the wants of the consumer belonging to the lower income group and must therefore include among their merchandise low priced yard goods. It was noted that the rayon crepe fabrics were usually displayed on the same table with the silk crepe thus making it difficult for the consumer-buyer to distinguish between the two fabrics unless information as to fiber content appeared on the label or placard.

The labeled material carried by the stores amounted to 17,539 yards, the unlabeled 3,014 yards as shown in table 3. It was necessary to count as a label any information found on the fabric regardless of its value. In city B 81.9 per cent of the material checked carried labels; in city A 89.4 per cent of the materials studied carried labels.

One might expect that city B would have carried more labeled material than city A due to fact that the stores in city B have a number of customers who possess textile buying information made available through trained home economists. Evidently their influence is not reflected in more extensive labeling.

A comparison of the labeled and unlabeled fabrics found in the different type stores reveals the extent to which labels, irrespective of information given, were used on the twelve fabrics studied. Of the entire yardage obtained 85.9 per cent was labeled. The small chain stores carried an average of 94.1 per cent labeled fabrics. The independently owned stores ranked next with 92.1 per cent of their fabrics labeled. This percentage would have been greater if the information on the prints in store 4 had been added to the tabulation of fabrics. It was interesting to note that stores belonging to large chains averaged only 66.9 per cent of labeled material. The low percentage shown by the last group mentioned was due in part to the unusually low percentage of labeled fabrics carried by the mail order chain store. Their labeled fabric amounted to only 48.1 per cent of the yardage obtained. Omitting these data the average percentage of labeled fabrics found in large chain stores was 85.8.

Table 3 Summary of the yardage and the percentage of labeled and unlabeled fabrics.

No. of: store	Yardage		Percentage	
	Total	labeled : unlabeled	labeled : unlabeled	
1	2569	2205      364	85.8      14.2	
2	5696	5134      562	90.1      9.9	
3	1819	1691      128	92.4      7.6	
4	1634	1609      25	98.4      1.6	
5	2205	1797      408	81.5      18.5	
6	4002	3833      164	95.9      4.1	
7	2628	1275      1353	48.1      51.9	
Total	20,553	17,539      3,014		

The clerks in some large chain stores have access to extensive information concerning their yard goods from a buyer's handbook. Such facts are available as fiber content, fabric construction, tensile strength, color fastness, percentage of sizing, and weight, along with directions for the care of the fabric and suggestions as to the use of the material. Because of the number of questions asked by shoppers, placards are sometimes used by the store to give information from this source concerning yard goods. A clerk stated that such devices as placards would possibly be the means by which more information would be given to the buyer.

The fact that the stores in which this form of information was available carried the lowest percentage of labeled materials would indicate that some retailers have facts concerning the quality of yard goods which they have not passed on to the consumer. The clerks in two stores said that some information came on the wrapper of the material. This was removed however, when the goods were placed in stock.

It was found that 5,387 of the entire 20,563 yards measured carried guarantees as shown in table 4. There were 7 different specification guarantees on the yardage checked. The silk crepe, rayon crepe, muslin, outing flannel, pillow tubing, sheeting, and towelings were in no

Table 4 Extent of labels, guarantees and brands found on the twelve fabrics.

Name of fabric	Yards			
	Total	Unlabeled	Guaranteed	Unbranded
Crope (silk flat)	1245	993	268	---
Crope (rayon flat)	870	173	703	---
Muslin (bleached)	2284	1897	387	---
Organdie	931	779	172	285
Outing flannel	1939	1139	830	---
Pillow tubing (bleached)	1395	1342	53	---
Pique	596	421	165	336
Printe	5724	5724	---	3184
Seersucker	1418	1270	148	1233
Suiting	1306	1249	56	449
Sheeting (bleached)	1351	1278	73	---
Towelings (crash)	1447	1267	160	---
Total	20653	17539	3014	5307

case guaranteed. The guarantees which were found usually referred to the fastness of color and to the permanency of finish. Other guarantees referred to were "vat dye", "vat color", and "80 square". One fabric carried only the statement "guaranteed" with no reference as to what quality was guaranteed. This type of information is indefinite and misleading to the buyer and serves only to sell the goods.

One store plans to discontinue as soon as possible the use of all guarantees. The reason given is that at present there exists no method whereby the conditions relating to the use of the goods can be controlled. When a whole bolt of fabric has been sold and only one customer returns a piece of material because it has lost its color, it is natural that the blame be placed on the consumer rather than on the producer. It has been claimed that consumers are prone not to return goods which are unsatisfactory.

Many more yards of fabrics were branded than were guaranteed. Manufacturers contend that brands are well established and that the consumer depends upon the brand as a means of judging quality. It was found that very few of the fabrics which were studied carried nationally advertised or well known brand names as shown in table 5. The number of nationally advertised brand names was probably less than one fourth of the total. Brand names give no facts that aid

Table 3 Brand names and yardage of each, found on the twelve fabrics.

Brand Name	:Yardage:	Brand Name	:Yardage:
A B C	1095	Gilbrae	1102
Advertiser	50	Golden Gate	77
American Home	63	Green Store	68
Amoskeag	170	Honor	293
Artic	375	Hope	131
Aurora	16	Indian Head	344
Baby Bunting	163	Invader	521
Beau Mode	254	Lady Pepperell	94
Bengal	43	Luna	56
Belding	63	Mandalay	24
Belle Isle	262	Moosehead	65
Bernstein	36	Nation Wide	486
Cloth of Gold	43	Our Own	98
Gonomy	300	Palisade	50
Crysta	28	Pennacle	445
Crusader	90	Pence	115
Daisy	44	Pepperell	270
Dream Knight	23	Pequot	445
Dwight Anchor	35	Peter Pan	226
Fox Craft	482	Peter Pan Superior	112



Polar	136	Spring Time	64
Pride of Dixie	106	Startex	150
Quadrige	438	Stevens	584
Romona	465	Tulare	166
Rondo	2529	Violet	150
Shamrock	92	Wedder Bros.	569
Silver Moon	40	Wizzard	350
Skinnere	35	Westgate	85
Splendid	60	Wear Well	320

in buying and the large number appearing on all classes of material probably serve only to confuse the buyer. All cotton prints carried brand names. Pillow tubing, muslin, sheeting, toweling, and outing flannel each showed much more yardage branded than unbranded.

The yardage of fabrics carrying informative labels proved to be approximately double that carrying non-informative labels as shown in table 6. The labeled materials as a whole averaged a trifle higher in price than the unlabeled although the difference was so slight as to be of little importance. This indicates that so far as the fabrics studied are concerned no relationship existed between price and informative labeling.

The information appearing on labels was meager and some statements would need to be interpreted to the trained as well as the untrained purchaser before they would be of value. Information other than brands and guarantees was given in 47 different ways. Many of these labels conveyed the same meaning but were worded differently. The following list of phrases and statements is the type of information other than grades, brands, and guarantees found on the twelve materials.

Soft finish.

Soft finish free from dressing.

Soft finish, Made from selected yarns.

Superior merit, bleached finish.

Feature value.

Bleached and finished, Made of specially selected yarns,  
pure soft finish.

Finish soft for the needle.

Pure finish.

Bleached.

French finish, Warranted spring water bleach.

Finished soft for the needle, 80 square, gilbrae fabric.

Imported, permanent finish organdie made in Switzerland.

Imported permanent finish swiss organdie.

Imported permanent finish, swiss organdie, non curl.

Genuine imported swiss organdie permanent finish.

Permanent finish.

Swiss organdie, imported.

Imported swiss organdie, permanent finish.

44/45 Imported swiss organdie.

Imported swiss.

44/45 permanent finish.

Non curl finish.

Non curl finish transparent organdie.

Transparent permanent finish.

Linen finish.

Wide cottons.

Color white.

Hollywood fabric, fast color.

Yarn dyed fast color.

80 square .

Vat dye .

Fast vat color 80 by 80.

Cambric prints, fast color, vat dye.

Soft finish, fast color.

Reg. patent.

Soft finish, fast color, mafal label.

Permanent finish (stamped on goods).

Wide sheeting.

Made from pure flax yarns unequalled toweling.

All linen toweling, unbleached.

All linen toweling, bleached.

Unbleached .

All linen .

Part linen .

Bleached rit .

Stevens all linen crash toweling, bleached quality P.

Stephens all linen toweling, unbleached.

Table 6 Width, yardage, and average price of six fabrics carrying informative and non-informative labels.

	:width :	Informative	:Non-informative		
	: in :	labels	labels		
Name of fabric	:inches:	Yards:	Ave. Price:	Yards:	Ave. Price
Crepe, silk flat	40	---	---	983	1.13
Crepe rayon flat	36	---	---	173	.76
Muslin (bleached)	36	608	.13	1289	.11
Organdie	44	330	.60	---	---
"	40	249	.59	---	---
"	38	89	.47	---	---
Outing flannel	39	---	---	---	---
"	36	---	---	280	.17
"	32	---	---	60	.18
"	30	---	---	176	.15
"	27	---	---	623	.12
Pillow tubing	36	40	.19	318	.26
(bleached)	40	---	---	383	.26
"	42	24	.29	487	.28
"	45	35	.21	50	.35
Pique	36	399	.48	30	.40
Prints	36	5631	.20	92	.22
Seersucker	36	1261	.44	---	---
Suiting	18	---	---	35	.15
"	36	707	.21	332	.22
"	44	---	---	120	.32
"	54	---	---	55	.37
Sheeting(bleached)	54	30	.35	---	---
"	63	39	.45	80	.41
"	72	45	.40	149	.39
"	81	150	.56	662	.42
"	90	---	---	123	.46

Toweling (crash)	18	770	.23	120	.29
(bleached)	16	70	.19	--	--
" " "	15	125	.09	--	--
" " "	20	--	--	14	.35
(Unbleached)	18	188	.18	--	--

The finish of the fabric was expressed by such statements as "soft finish", "pure finish", "French finish", "linen finish", "non-curl finish", and "finished soft for the needle". According to Johnson (8) finish included a number of processes that are applied to fabrics to improve their appearance or handle. The same author says, it is the finish that sells the goods. Another object is to cover up the defects and make the goods resemble a better grade. The statement "permanent finish" means that the fabric will retain its finish. This information appeared on organdie and was stamped on the selvage of Indian Head. "non-curl finish" appeared on the newer pieces of organdie and is a special quality that is of interest to the purchaser. The other information referring to finish seems of no value.

The yarn count of fabrics was expressed in terms of "80 square" and "80 by 80". Yarn count (7) of the fabric means the number of warp and filling threads in each inch of fabric. This count is usually taken when cotton goods are in the gray, and as the fabric passes through the finishing processes the warp threads may increase in number per inch and the filling threads decrease due to the handling of the fabric. Thus the yarn count on the finished



fabric may be the count in the gray rather than the actual count of the fabric as sold over the counter. Information concerning yarn count appeared in only a few instances and those were on prints and muslins.

The information relating to color fastness was expressed in such statements as "fast color", "yarn dyed fast color", "vat dye", "vat color", "tub fast" and "fast to washing". According to Hess (4) the factors affecting the fastness of color may be light, humidity, perspiration and laundering processes. Therefore "tub fast" and "fast to washing" give some measure of information but are not entirely satisfactory. Such a label as "fast color" seems too indefinite, and gives the retailer an opportunity to avoid responsibility for making good claims to fast color because specific guarantees have not been stated. The "Kafal" label used on fabrics which meet the standard of the National Association of Finishes of Cotton Fabrics for color fastness, was found on one piece of suiting.

"Yarn-dyed fast color" suggests to the trained shopper something of the quality of the dyeing process, but it should be recognized that the fastness of color is dependent upon the type of dye used, rather than upon the stage in fabric construction in which the dyeing is done. The newer fabrics were found to carry such labels as "vat dye" and "vat color". According to Matthews(11) vat dyes are

dyes which are highly insoluble in water but readily yield products in reduction which are soluble in alkaline solution. They are therefore applied in a special kind of dye bath in which the dye is reduced to a soluble form by means of a strong reducing agent. The dye bath consists then of a mixture of dye, the reducing agent, and an alkali. This mixture is called a "vat".

It is possible to employ vat dyes in printing fabrics by application of a dye paste. These pastes possess the same degree of fastness as the particular vat dyes from which they are made.

"Imported" according to a ruling of the Federal Trade Commission (15) must not be attached to goods unless those goods are imported. Organdie was the only fabric carrying this statement.

The word "silk" is not to be used on a label unless the fiber is silk. (2). Rayon fabric was rolled on a belt board labeled "Bernstein Silks". According to the Federal Trade Commission's ruling this would be misbranding.

Another symbol used was one which appeared on crash toweling and designated quality. The letters P and A were found stamped under the word "quality". A clerk interpreted the symbol as meaning that P quality was the best in the special make of toweling under consideration. The purchaser of toweling would no doubt overlook such as

indication of quality because the letter "P" fails to carry the meaning that would be conveyed by "A" or "first". Toweling was the only fabric which carried information as to fiber content, expressed both as "all linen" and "part linen".

It is interesting to note that in no instance was any information given relating to shrinkage, pure dye, or the per cent of weighting. Cotton prints carried the most information of the twelve fabrics studied. Such facts as thread count and fastness of color to laundering were frequently given. Suiting ranked second as to information.

Some of the terms appearing on non-informative labels were "feature value", "superior merit", "always best", "spring water bleached" and "Hollywood fabric" most of which are of the nature of "trade puffing". Brand names and trade-marks were also classed among non-informative labeling.

#### Data Available from Wholesaler

The wholesaler may be the manufacturer of goods or he may be a jobber. The wholesale establishment visited, as far as yard goods were concerned, was a jobbing house. The information available to the retail buyer was no more complete than that given to the consumer buyer and consisted of such facts as appeared on the bolts of fabric. The desire on the part of the retailer to purchase as small a yardage

PLATE I

Labels carrying brand names, but little or no other  
information concerning the fabric.

**WIDDER BROS.**  
INC.  
- MANUFACTURERS -  
**CREPE**  **SILKS**

"Crepes of the Better Kind"

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.



**VOILE LA SUISSE**  
WASHABLE COLORS

Style 20 Lot B 697  
Pat. 725 Yds. 100

Dept. 6

HAROLD  
**BERNSTEIN**  
**SILKS**  
NEW YORK

**Stoffel's Transparent Organdies**

Made in Switzerland

**SKINNER'S SILKS AND SATINS**

LOOK FOR THE NAME IN THE SELVAGE

ESTABLISHED 1848



**SKINNER'S CRÉPE**

C. S. 796

PLATE II

Labels that give some information concerning fabric qualities. Among these are manufacturer's label guaranteeing permanent finish and fast color; labels indicating fiber content; and labels indicating grades of crash towel-  
ing, "P" and "A". Note that in no instance does an adequate label appear.

**INDIAN HEAD**  
 36 Inch  
 PERMANENT FINISH  
 Nashua Mfg. Co.  
 Nashua, N.H.  
 PAT. Yes  
 COLORS GUARANTEED  
 ABSOLUTELY FAST

**GUARANTEE**  
 If any garment made wholly or principally of  
 INDIAN HEAD colored fabrics fails to give  
 proper service because of the fading or run-  
 ning of INDIAN HEAD colors, we will make  
 good the total cost of the garment.

**INDIAN HEAD**  
 REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

Nashua Mfg. Co.  
 Nashua, N.H.



INDIAN HEAD is an internationally regis-  
 tered Trade Mark, and all persons are hereby  
 warned against using this board without first  
 removing this label.

**QUADRIGA CLOTE**  
 30 INCH  
 NO.   
 YDS.   
 A SILK FABRIC  
 COLORS GUARANTEED FAST TO WASHING  
 AND NOT FADE IN THE SUN OR UNDER  
 ORDINARY HOUSE LIGHTS. MORE EXCLUSIVE

**Stevens Linen Crash A** BLEACHED 10" BLACK

**Stevens Linen Crash P** UNBLEACHED 14"

Lot No. 5772  
**ABC FABRICS**  
**CRUSADER SEERSUCKER**  
 Guaranteed Fast Colors  
 Pat. 20 Color 30 Yds. 30

**STEVENS ALL LINEN**  
 QUALITY P PRICE

**BORDEN SEERSUCKER EFFECTS**  
 Guaranteed Fast Colors  
 YARD WIDE  
 M. C. BORDEN & SONS, INC.  
 NEW YORK, N.Y.  
 STYLE 13  
 COLOR 27 Yes

**CAT. 16-6002**  
**PART LINEN CRASH**  
 50 YARDS

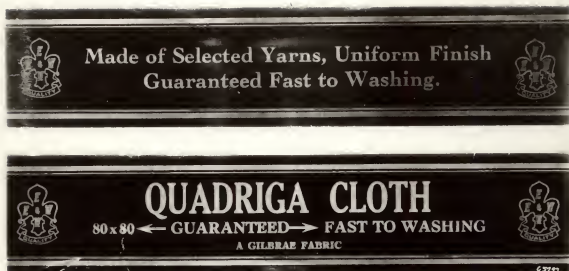
62712



PLATE III

A label characteristic of cotton prints. Thread count and a guarantee of color fast to washing was found on most cotton prints. Such a label binds a new bolt of fabric and is removed when a yardage is sold.

## PLATE III



as is possible, has led the wholesaler to sell a part of a bolt of fabric. The short length of material is wrapped onto a bolt which carries no label. Some of the lack of labels found on yard goods may be attributed to this method of buying.

#### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. The total yardage checked was 20,539; city A carried 10,084 yards and city B 10,463 yards.
2. The yardage of fabrics carrying brand names totaled 15,303; the unbranded 5,251. All cotton prints carried brand names. Pillow tubing, muslin, sheeting, toweling, and outing flannel each showed much more yardage branded than unbranded.
3. The yardage carrying guarantees totaled 5,307, with 15,172 yards not guaranteed. There were 7 different specification guarantees on the yardage checked.
4. Material carrying no labeling whatever amounted to 3,014 yards.
5. Information on labels other than brands and guarantees was given in 47 different ways. Many of the labels conveyed the same meaning but were worded differently.
6. On the whole the average price of the labeled material is a trifle higher than the unlabeled.
7. The stores in city A, located in the western part

of the state, carried 89.4 per cent of labeled materials, 10.6 per cent unlabeled. Stores in city B, located in the east-central part of the state, carried 81.9 per cent labeled materials, 18.1 per cent unlabeled.

8. The independently owned stores carried 92.1 per cent labeled materials, 7.9 per cent unlabeled; stores belonging to the large chains 66.9 per cent labeled, 33.1 per cent unlabeled; small chain stores, 94.1 per cent labeled materials, 5.9 per cent unlabeled.

9. The information found on labels was often meager and of little value. The clerks in some large chains have access to extensive information which is sometimes used to supplement the unsatisfactory labels found on yard goods.

10. The yardage of fabrics carrying some informative labeling amounted to nearly twice that of the non-informative.

11. The information available through the wholesaler concerning yard goods is no more extensive than that available through the retailer.

#### CONCLUSION

Fabrics sold by the yard do not carry adequate informative labeling.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Professor Alpha Latzke for her assistance in the directing of this investigation; and to those merchants who have made it possible to secure the data.

## LITERATURE CITED

- (1) Agnew, P.G.  
The movement for standards for consumer goods.  
Annals of Amer. Acad. of Pol. & Soc. Sc.  
173:30-39. May 1934.
- (2) Coles, Jessie V.  
Standardization of Consumer's goods.  
New York. Ronald Press Co. 323 p. 1932.
- (3) Cook, Rosemond C. and Moore, Virginia Thornell.  
"Pure" labels for pure silks. Prac. Home Econ.  
12:12 p. 348-349. Dec. 1934.
- (4) Cranor, Katherine and Scott, Clarice  
The consumer and branded goods. Textile World  
74:3476. Dec. 1932.
- (5) Dooley, William H.  
Textiles. Chicago. D.C. Heath and Co. p. 760.  
1924.
- (6) Edgerton, Lillian  
Let the label carry your message. Textile World  
80:312-313. July 25, 1931.
- (7) Hess, Katherine P.  
Textile fibers and their use.  
Chicago. Huppincott Co. 354 p. 1931.
- (8) Johnson, George H.  
Textile fabrics. New York. Harper Brothers.  
326 p. 1927.
- (9) Kyrk, Hazel  
Economic problems of the family. New York.  
Harper and Brothers. 500 p. 1933.
- (10) Mack, Pauline Deery  
Clothing and household goods for the consumer.  
Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. and Soc. Sc. 173:35-42.  
H. 1934.

- (11) Matthews, Merritt J.  
Application of Dyestuffs. New York. John Wiley  
and Sons, Inc. 768 p. 1920.
- (12) Recommendation from the Consumer's Advisory Board  
of the E.R.A. Mimeo. 3153. 13 p.
- (13) Scott, Clarice L.  
Labels on clothes we buy. Jour. Home Econ.  
26:546-550. 1934.
- (14) Standards of quality - Consumers Division National  
Emergency Council. Mimeo. Bul. 3. 15 p. 1934.
- (15) U. S. Federal Trade Commission Decisions. V. 7:525.  
November 5, 1923 - July 1924.
- (16) Textile research - a survey of progress compiled by  
The U. S. Institute for Textile Research, Inc.  
Cambridge Technology Press, Mass. Inst. of  
Tech. 264 p. 1932.



## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Agnew, P. G.  
Technical standards for consumer goods. A "Five-Year-Plan". Jour. Home Econ. 23:1095-1102. 1931.
- Agnew, P. G.  
Standards for consumer goods. Ind. Stand. 5:6, 115-118. 1934.
- Agnew, P. G.  
Standards - Action vs. wishful thinking. Jour. Home Econ. 23:541-545. 1934.
- Agnew, P. G. and McNair, J.W.  
Certification and labeling activities of 60 commodity fields. Amer. Stand. Assoc. Bul. 3, 1-24. 1932.
- A. S. A. is asked by F. R. A. board to develop grading system. Ind. Stand. 5:214-217. 1934.
- A. S. A. directors approve report on certification and labeling. Ind. Stand. 6:43. 1935.
- Carver, Thomas Elixon, Wollman, Mary Schenck, and McGowan, Ellen Beers.  
Textile problems for the consumer. New York. Macmillan. 175 p. 1935.
- Coles, Jessie V.  
What labels tell us of the goods we buy. Prac. Home Econ. 12:320-321. 1934.
- Consumer standards and information needed. Ind. Stand. 6:73. 1935.
- Chain stores cooperate for more informative labels. Ind. Stand. 5:197-198. 1934.
- Denney, Grace G.  
What the consumer should know about clothing and textiles. Jour. Home Econ. 24:21-24. 1932.

- Edgerton, Lillian  
The buyer's viewpoint. Textile World 78:2577. 1930.
- Education vs. protection of the consumer. Jour. Home Econ. 20:412. 1929.
- Fabric identification for the consumer. 11. Textile World 68:1026. 1928.
- Frost, W.  
The consumer's purchasing problem. Unpublished. Brookings Institute thesis. Wash., D.C. p. 77. 1930.
- Gaskell, H. B.  
Labeling and trade commission. Textile World 63:2268. 1925.
- Gilbert, L. R.  
Commercial standards in textile industry. Textile World. 79:2689-2690. 1931.
- Goldthwaite, Chas. F.  
Consumers are demanding more durability in textiles. Textile World 75:1669. 1929.
- Grocery chain stores urge grade labeling. Ind. Stand. 6:17-19. 1935.
- Hart, Hornell  
Wanted: A new deal for the consumer. Jour. Home Econ. 26:490-492. 1934.
- Hotchkiss, G. B.  
Will standards of quality help consumers. Advertising and Selling 23: 29, 44-50. 1934.
- Hotchkiss, G.B.  
Grade marks or trade marks? Advertising and Selling 24:30, 75. 1934.
- Housewives want grade labeling. Ind. Stand. 5:152, 1934.
- Howe, H. R.  
How shall we buy? The need for consumer standards. Jour. Amer. Assoc. Univ. Women 25:82-85. 1932.
- Interesting the consumer in standards on specifications. Jour. Home Econ. 22:210. 1930.

Keeping up with the labeling controversy. Food. Ind.  
7:20-21. 1935.

Kellog, Mary

How quality grading has worked out in Canada.  
Advertising and Selling 23:29-30, 40, 42. 1934.

Labels for blankets. Jour. Home Econ. 25:224-226. 1933.

Label and sticker advertising. Ptd. Salesmanship 60:72-73.  
1932.

Laundry tested label for wash fabrics. Textile World  
83:20. 1932.

Lynd, Robert S.

Will grade marks kill trade marks? Advertising and  
Selling 24:30-31. 1934.

Missal, Adeline R.

What does the consumer want to know? Jour. Home Econ.  
26: 498. 1934.

O'Brien, Ruth

Textile buying for the home should be aided by  
system of labeling. U. S. Dept. Agr. 1231:513-516.  
1931.

Price and quality standards for consumer goods. Jour.  
Home Econ. 26:516-517. 1934.

Protection vs. education. Jour. Home Econ. 20:2526. 1928.

Report of the committee on certification and labeling.  
Amer. Stand. Assoc. Bul. 3, p. 24. 1932.

Schlink, F. J.

Consumer's problem. Amer. Dyestuff Rep. 20:722-737.  
1931.

Scott, J. L.

Price tags, labels and other things. 11. Ptd.  
Salesmanship 50:1600. 1927.

Smith, K. A.  
"Labels". Jour. Home Econ. 16:553-558. 1924.

Sweitzer, Charming E.  
The consumer and the retailer of today. Jour. Home Econ. 21:731-738. 1929.

Thompson, Margaret Diswarr  
Consumer protection and the A.A.A. Jour. Home Econ. 26:511-512. 1934.

What this quality grading business is all about. Advertising and Selling 23:20-27, 36. 1934.

Women and grade labels. Jour. Home Econ. 27:303-304. 1935.

Woolf, D. G.  
Textile Education - a timely subject with a glorious past but a far greater future. Textile World 71: 3599, 3600. 1927.